We will certainly take into consideration this suggestion. We will take action against those fake colleges which are running even today and also those which have been closed, if they have been given permission by the UGC or the AICTE. If they are running without their permission, then we are helpless. But, if they have been given permission by these bodies, then certainly we will look into this matter.

DR. M. N. DAS: Sir, while the UGC at long last has been able to detect and identify some of the fake universities in the country, I would like to know whether the UGC and the Ministry of HRD are aware of the fact that there are some genuine and reasonable demands from some regions of some States for establishment of new universities, and, if so, what policy has been formulated on a definite basis so that universities could be opened where the demands are genuine.

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI: This is between the State Government and the UGC. If the State Government has the necessary funds and requirements, and satisfies the norms of the UGC, then there is no bar from the Ministry to any State opening a university.

प्रो॰ विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा: सभापति महोदय, मंत्री महोदय ने जिन-जिन यूनिवर्सिटीज का जिक्र किया है इसके अलावा आयुर्वेदिक की, यूनानी की, होम्योपैथी की, स्पोर्टर्स की, फिजिकल एजुकेशन के नाम पर देश भर में सैकड़ों यूनिवर्सिटीज और कालेज चल रहे हैं। उनके प्रतिदिन अखबारों में इश्तहार दिए जाते हैं और लाखों आदमियों की जिन्दगी के साथ खिलवाड़ हो रहा है। मंत्री महोदय ने इस बारे में जो चिन्ता प्रकट की है वह प्रशंसनीय है। परन्तु केवल एक हजार रुपये का जो जुर्माना है उसको बढ़ाकर एक लाख या 10 लाख करने में या सजा का प्रावधान करने में क्या किसी कमेटी की जरूरत है? अगर उनको कड़ी सजा देनी है तो कड़ी सजा तो कोई भी सीधे तौर पर कर सकता है। एक हजार रुपये के बजाय उसका जुर्माना इतना होगा या इतनी सजा होगी क्या मंत्री जी इस पर विचार करेंगे? कमेटी की रिपोर्ट पता नहीं कब आएगी? क्या अखबारों में इसका इश्तहार देने पर कोई प्रतिबन्ध लगाया जाएगा?

डा॰ मुरली मनोहर जोशी: सर, जहां तक चिकित्सा के क्षेत्र के विश्वविद्यालयों का सवाल है तो चिकित्सा का क्षेत्र हमारे मंत्रालय के अधीन नहीं है। उसके बारे में स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय के पास जो जानकारी होगी उसके ऊपर वहां से कार्रवाई की जाएगी। अगर स्पोर्ट्स के बारे में किसी ने जाली विश्वविद्यालय की रचना की है तो इसकी हमारे पास कोई सूचना नहीं है और सूचना मिलने पर हम जरूर उनके खिलाफ कड़े कदम उठायेंगे। केवल हजार रुपये से, लाख रुपये से या 50 हजार रुपये या दो लाख रुपये का जुर्माना दे देना, इतना ही पर्याप्त नहीं है। इसमें कानून की कई डाइमेंशन्स हैं। इसमें राज्य सरकारों से भी सलाह लेनी पड़ेगी, उनको अपने रजिस्ट्रेशन के कानून में भी तब्दीली करनी पड़ेगी। उस कानून के अन्तर्गत क्या-क्या किया जा सकता है इस पर भी हम उन्हें सलाह देंगे क्योंकि इसको इम्पलीमेंट करना है, यह सब उनके हाथ में रहेगा। प्रोसीक्यूशन जिस-जिस लेवल पर करना है वह राज्य सरकारों के माध्यम से ही होगा। इसलिए कानून में ऐसी व्यवस्थाएं करनी होंगी। केवल जुर्माने का ही सवाल न हो बल्कि सजा दी जाए और वह किस तरह से दी जा सकती है, उसमें कोई भी लूपहोल न रहे, उसमें कोई भी क्षेत्र ऐसा न बचे जिसका लाभ उठाकर जाली विश्वविद्यालय चल सके। मैं तो इतना ही कह सकता हूं कि डा॰ अमरीक सिंह इस मामले में बहुत ही एक्सपर्ट हैं, बहुत जल्दी काम करते हैं, उनकी बनाई हुई कमेटी से आप यह आशा करेंगे कि वह बहुत शीघ्रता से इस काम को करेंगे। आप भरोसा रखिए हम जल्दी से जल्दी इस मामले में कदम उठायेंगे। हमने उनको केवल 30 दिन का ही समय दिया है और आप यह समझें कि जितनी जल्दी हम इसको कर सकते हैं, वह करेंगे।

"Underground Mineral Resources in Forests

*342. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are large amounts of underground mineral resources in areas which are forested;

(b) whether State Governments are putting pressure to destory forest area for development projects; and

(c) what action Government are taking to protect the limited area of forests from such developmental activity?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS SHRI SURESH PRABHU): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Although accurate information as regards to occurrence of underground mineral resources in forest areas is not available, it is observed that mineral resources do occur in forested areas.

(b) A large number of proposals have been received from various State Governments for diversion of forest land for development projects under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

(c) The Proposal for development projects received by the Ministry are examined in accordance with guidelines issued under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Approval is accorded to a proposal after ascertaining that the project is site specific and requirement of forest land is bare minimum. While according approval to a proposal, suitable safegaurds including compensatory afforestation etc. are stipulated to mitigate adverse effects of such diversion.

Further, in order to formulate a strategy for developmental activities in the years to come which will be in harmony with forest conservation, the Ministry is considering constitution of an expert group for reconciliation of needs of each development sector with the objectives laid down in National Forest Policy. The Committee will also collect the exact extent of sectorwise divergence of forest land since 1947 for non-forestry purposes and will examine the correlationship between forests and mineral deposits beneath the forest land in greater detail using satellite data and other available scientific data/informations.

A seperate expert committee on development of a long term strategy *vis-a-vis* mineral exploration from such area has already been consituted on 3.3.1998. The main terms of reference of this Committee are:— rapid assessment and prioritising of rich/sensitive areas under good, uninterrupted forest cover; GIS mapping of forests, minerals, tribal population etc., review of mining strategies and technologies being adopted in the mining sector *vis-a-vis* recent global developments/standards to anticipate and mitigate alternations in the forest ecosystem; laying of environmental/ecological standards/safeguards during and after mining etc.

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am sorry to say that the reply given by the Government to part 'A' of my question is not satisfactory. Sir, if the Government is not aware of the mineral reserves, then who would be aware? The Statement given by the Government that the exact information is not available is disappointing.

Part 'B' of my question is whether various State Governments were pressurizing the Government for carrying out mining operation in forest area? The reply again is not adequate.

The third part of my question is regarding what action Government are taking to protect the limited forest area? Formation of a Committee is not enough. I was also a member of the National Afforestation and Eco-Development Board for two years and hardly and meeting was held. In 1980, Forest Conservation Act was enacted and Forest Policy was announced in 1988. Our forest cover is dwindling. The area is getting degraded. As per the Policy, we should have 33 per cent. of our land area under forest cover, whereas we have only 19 per cent. under forest cover. But the forest cover we have is only 19 per cent. Even out of this 19 per cent. Even out of this 19 per cent, only 12 per cent. has a crown density of 40 per cent. The remaining 7 per cent. is an absolutely degraded forest area. What is the Government planning to do about it?

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Sir, it is always estimated that a thick forest cover is lying above rich mineral deposits. It has been proved not by any scientific

data available with the Government, but by estimation only. Many a time, we receive specific requests from the State Governments wherein it is said that we need to deforest a particular land forming part of a thick forest cover only because rich mineral deposits are lying beneath that thick forest area. That is the reason why we have commissioned a study to really find out if there is a correlation that exists, any scientific correlation that exists, between a thick forest cover and the availability of rich mineral deposits beneath that thick forest cover. Only when we have such a scientific data available with us, we can really conclude that there is a correlation that exists between the two. Though there is correlation that appears to be there, there is no conclusive evidence available with the Government right now. Only with such a study, it could be done. That is the reason why we have commissioned such a study.

I share the concern expressed by the hon. Member. It is a fact. He has said that out of the 19 per cent, only 12 per cent of the area has a ground density of 40 per cent. As a matter of fact, it is 11.17 per cent; 0.83 per cent. less than what he has said. The total forest area is just above 19 per cent. But it includes a lot of shrub forests. It is not, really speaking, the type of forest which one desires to have. Therefore, it is necessary to have a long-term policy in order to find out how we can protect the forests, in the light of lot of demands that are being made on forest land.

There are various ways in which the Government is working. I would like to point out to the hon. Member.

First of all, as I have said already, we have commissioned a study in order to establish the correlation. But that is not enough. We need to really find out as to which are the forest areas which need to be conserved at all costs. For this purpose, a land-use pattern survey needs to be done. Certain areas have to be reserved as forest areas in spite of the demands that may be made on those areas, on account of irrigation, on account of mining activity, industrial activity, agricultural activity, or any other demand that may be made on such a forest land. Unless we have such a land-use pattern survey, which is really necessary, it will not be possible to protect the forests. This is, of course, not a job for my Ministry alone to do. For such a survery, we have to involve the State Governments. We have also to involve other Ministries. It is an inter-Ministerial job. We have already initiated some steps in this regard.

In the last three months, I, personally, had meetings with all the Forest Ministers of the States, excepting the North-Eastern States, whom I propose to meet shortly. We have impressed upon the State Governments the need to conserve and increase the forest area, to reach the level of 33 per cent. which is part of the National Forest Policy commitment. Unless we involve the State Governments, it will not be possible to increase the forest area because the State Governments are really in charge of the land. The Forest Conservation Act is to be implemented by the Central Government as a regulatory Act. Unless we have the participation of the State Governments as well as the other user Ministries who make several demands on forest land, it will not be possible to protect the forests. But as I said, we are not only commissioning a study, but we are also adopting a multi-pronged strategy to tackle this.

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Sir, eighteen years ago, we framed the Forest Conservation Act. But nothing has been done so far. The forests not only provide ecological balance, but environmental stability also, which is a very important factor for our civilisation. In addition to this, ten per cent. of our national income is lost because of the degradation of forests. This has been pointed out by the Tata Research Institute.

Sir, setting up of Committees, formation of Committees, is not enough.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Put your question.

SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: My question is: what is the Government planning to do with the 90 million hectares of wasteland available in the country, which is not in use? Why can't the Government frame a policy whereby this wasteland could be put to proper use, for afforestation, or, at least, for replacement purposes?

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Sir, "wasteland" is really not part of my Ministry. Even then, only about ten days back or two weeks back, we had convened a meeting in which all the concerned officers of the Ministry of Rural Development including those concerned with wasteland, were present. We involved a number of non-governmental organisations like Mr. Mohan Dharia's organisation, in this. We are trying to formulate policies to find out how degraded forest land as well as wasteland which is really not a forest land, could be put to productive use.

Sir, a large amount of rural development fund is spent through the DRDA. One of the measures that we are also taking is that we are requesting the Planning Commission as well as the Ministry of Rural Development to earmark a specific portion of that only for the purpose of afforestation because unless we have forestry policies, the Watershed Development Programme will really not have any relevance. So, we are trying to integrate all these aspects and also to make a policy.

As far as the policy for degraded forest land is concerned, Sir, the present provisions of the Forest Conservation Act are applicable to all the land which has been described as forest in the State records. If a particular land is for forest purposes, even though degraded, diversion of that land for non-forest purposes requires approval under the Forest Conservation Act. It can be put to use only for some limited purposes. So, unless that Act is amended, we will not be able to make any changes in the application of its use for non-forest purposes unless it is stipulated under the Act.

SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Sir, the Gir Forest is the only abode of the Asiatic lions in the country. As he has rightly said, a land may be forest on record, but there may be no forest there. Within the forest area, cutting of forests is going on. A number of cement factories have come up, more so on the periphery of the Gir Forest. Not only that, but a straight bus route has been laid by the State Transport Service. There have been incidents of lions getting injured and ultimately dying. Will the Minister send a special team to enquire about the safety of the lions there? The factories are carrying out blasts for digging out minerals and lime deposits which are used for preparing cement. Will the Minister see to it that there is safety and proper environment for lions? The Gir Forest is the only habitat for lions. Will the Minister send a special team to enquire into it? A number of articles have appeared in "THE TIMES OF INDIA" on this. The factories are running like anything and they are increasing their activity, maybe with the consent of the State Government. All efforts to migrate the lions have also failed. Therefore, will the hon. Minister thoroughly enquire into it and see that the activity of the industries, particularly the cement factories, does not endanger, to any extent, the safe and silent living of the lions?

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Sir, as per the policy that we are following now, we do not allow any industrial activity to be started in sanctuaries. Obviously, the hon. Member is referring to such activities which have been started before the notification has been issued. If these particular factories that he has mentioned are really endangering the habitat of the lions, we will definitely try to protect them. As the hon. Member has correctly pointed out, that is the only lion habitat in the country. We are trying to develop

another in Madhya Pradesh. That is beside the point. This is the only lion habitat in the country. That is the reason why we will definitely try to protect it. However, now the policy of the Government is that no new industrial activity will be allowed in sanctuaries.

SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Why don't you stop the factories? That is my question.

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: I will look into it.

SHRI ADHIK SHIRODKAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, whenever forests are destroyed, there is an adverse environmental impact. Will the hon. Minister consider that whenever such a proposal is received and permission is granted for whatever reasons, there should be a condition precedent that the person or the institution of the Government applying for such a permission, should have a duty to plant 150 per cent. trees and to see that they are tended to for the next ten years which is the necessary and mandatory period for safeguarding the duty planted trees. Would that be done?

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Sir, there is a provision in the Forest Conservation Act that whenever a piece of land is diverted for non-forest purposes, a stipulated area of land has to be brought into compulsory afforestation. It depends upon the type of activities that we are talking about. For example, if a piece of forest land is diverted for non-forest purposes and the State Government or the project proponent is willing to offer forest land for compulsory afforestation, we stipulate an equivalent amount of compulsory afforestation. In the absence of that, many times the compulsory afforestation is as high as 200 per cent and sometimes even more on-a-case to case basis. So, we are going beyond the stipulation that the hon. Member is desiring and we are stipulating 200 per cent of compulsory afforestation. But, the hon. Member is absolutely right that we are facing certain deficulties. That is in the area of regulating the amount of compulsory afforestation, which is handed over to the State Governments. We are now clearing the projects in two stages—stage one clearance and stage two clearance to ensure that the project proponent does not just commit and ultimately does not plant trees. The stage one clearance only ensures the site specific clearance and stage two clearance is offered when the actual site is really introduced for compulsory afforestation. But despite that the responsibility of compulsory afforestation lies with the State Governments. Many a time we have found that though the commitment of the State Government had been for a higher amount, the amount that has been brought under compulsory afforestation is much lower than what was really committed.

SHRI RANGANATH MISHRA: The hon. Minister has indicated that the land capable of growing a forest may not be a forest land. Here the Minister is wrong. Therefore, wherever you can grow a forest, it can be taken under the Act. A lot of lands, which are lying fallow, can be taken over. Even though the Ministry has indicated its concern on it, it has not been taking any interest. That is what I feel.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have no question to ask.

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Can I clarify his point, Sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, please, clarify.

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Sir, the hon. Member is referring to the judgment of the Supreme Court. It said that the Forest Conservation Act has not defined a forest at all. In fact, the Forest Conservation Act, starts from Section 2 straightway. So, for the first time, the hon. Supreme Court has defined the meaning of the word 'forest'. As a result of it we are now introducing in the Act the dictionary meaning of the word 'forest', as is properly understood. That is how we interpret it.

In the Ministry, when we offer clearances for non-forest purposes, whatever is the land, as has been defined as a result of the Supreme Court judgment, it is the land that is considered as a forest land for the purpose of the Ministry's administration.

SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Sir, it is highly necessary that the forest is conserved and, if possible, the forest area is increased. But, at the same time, it is a well-known fact that large areas under the forest are having very valuable minerals. So, in the national interest, it is highly necessary that these minerals are employed without hampering the ecological balance. Therefore, I would like to know whether the Government is considering to prepare a long-term plan on the basis of which, say portion by portion, minerals could be exploited. At the same time, more alternate areas are also brought under the forest cover. I would like to know whether any such detailed programme will be prepared or has already been prepared.

SHRI SURESH PRABHU: Sir, we must realise one point that the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 is already in existence. It normally applies to major minerals. It is for proper exploitation of minerals. If it is to be done, a working plan has to be submitted by the proponent to the Minerals Ministry. That plan requires that the mining company, which is going to exploit the potential minerals has also to recoup and put that land back into the same condition as it was existing before. But, despite this, it has not been complied with. Therefore, we are now trying to introduce additional conditionalities as a result of which the power is conferred upon the Central Government by virtue of the Forest Conservation Act. Stipulating conditions alone are not enough, because the compliances become very, very difficult. For that we need a participatory approach of the State Governments as well as of the project proponents themselves. That is why I have also convened a meeting of the representatives of the mining industry. As I said, for the first time in the history we have really commissisoned a study to find out the corelationship between the two. However, we will definitely take such steps as are really warranted and we need to have a long-terms plan. That is possible to be implemented successfully only if we have the participation of all other Ministries and not of the Ministry of Environment and Forests alone.

बच्चों के हितों की रक्षा हेतु पंचवर्षीय शैक्षणिक और तकनीकी आपातकाल की घोषणा

*343. श्री जनेश्वर मिश्र: क्या मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या आज दक्षिण एशिया विश्व के सबसे गरीब, जाहिल और कुपोषित क्षेत्र में तबदील हो गया है;

(ख) क्या प्रख्यात मानव संसाधन विशेषज्ञों के अनुसार इस स्थिति से बाहर निकलने का एक मात्र उपाय यह है कि बच्चों के हितों की रक्षा हेतु पंचवर्षीय शैक्षणिक और तकनीकी आपातकाल की घोषणा की जाये;

(ग) यदि हां, तो क्या सरकार इस विषय में राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर राज्य सरकारों और अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर दूसरे देशों की सरकारों के साथ मिलकर शीघ्र कार्रवाई करेगी; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो कब तक और यदि नहीं, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं?

मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री (डा० मुरली मनोहर जोशी): (क) से (घ) एक विवरण सदन के पटल पर प्रस्तुत है।

विवरण

(क) 'ह्यूमन डिवैल्पमैंट इन साउथ एशिया' नामक रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, दक्षिण एशिया सबसे अधिक निर्धन, सर्वाधिक निरक्षर और सबसे अधिक कुपोषित और महिलाओं के प्रति उदासीन—वास्तव में विश्व में सर्वाधिक वंचित क्षेत्र बनता जा रहा है। दक्षिण एशिया में मानव विकास पर रिपोर्ट में भारत द्वारा शिक्षा तथा संबंधित क्षेत्रों में की गयी प्रगति की सराहना की गयी है।